

Fall 8-15-2000

## ENG 3405-002: Children's Literature

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### Recommended Citation

Stevens, Carol, "ENG 3405-002: Children's Literature" (2000). *Fall 2000*. 112.  
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English 3405 Section 002

## **Children's Literature**

Fall 2000

Dr. Carol Stevens

### **Contact Information:**

Office 315J Coleman

Hours 3:30-5:30 TuTh, W 3:30-4:30 and by appt.

(Please note: office hours are subject to rescheduling)

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### **Course Description**

*The catalog describes this course as a literature course emphasizing "wide acquaintance with the great bodies of world literature, myth, legend, etc. and with the best poetry for children." What that means is that we'll be reading poetry, fiction, picture books and stories of every imaginable description, both extensively and intensively, and gaining experience with them through reading, discussing, creatively interpreting, and writing about them.*

### **Goals**

*When you've finished this course, I hope you will have found pleasure and enjoyment in children's literature through careful reading and study of children's books. You will know the elements of fiction as they apply to evaluation and analysis of literature. You'll know the defining characteristics of various genres or types of children's lit. You will learn the elements of illustration and be able to explain how visual elements reinforce and extend the story in a picture book. You'll know some of the major literary awards and their selection criteria, with some practice in applying them to your own evaluation of picture books. You'll also become familiar with major authors and illustrators, have read some books deemed "classics" and consider what makes a book a classic. You'll have read some myth and folklore, and have acquired some historical knowledge of the development of children's lit, including multicultural literature. You'll be able to analyze and interpret works of children's literature in discussion and in your writing, and be able to read and apply to your own study research and literary criticism in the field. That's a tall order, so we're in for a full semester.*

### **A Definition and Some Truisms**

*"Children's literature is a distinct, vital body of literature that is intended for a child audience (ages 0 to 14) but is written by adults." (Carol Lynch-Brown and Carl M. Tomlinson). It always reflects in some way the values of the culture that produced it and usually serves as an agent for transmitting or teaching those values (including the values we act out but sometimes won't admit to). Sometimes the term "Children's Literature" applies more to what is published and marketed as such than it does to what writers write or what children read.*

## Textbooks

Dahl, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.  
DePaola, *Legend of Old Befana*.  
Griffith and Frey, *Classics of Children's Literature*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.  
Keene, *Secret of the Old Clock*.  
Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson, *Essentials of Children's Literature*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.  
McDermott, *Arrow to the Sun*.  
Sendak, *Where the Wild Things Are*.  
Taylor, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*.  
Van Allsburg, *Jumanji*.  
Yolen, *The Devil's Arithmetic*.

## Grades

All assignments will be given point values. Work done in groups, class discussions, and preparations for papers will be reflected in those values. The course is graded A, B, C, D, F. Do the work with some degree of skill and care, and participate, and your grade will most likely be a C. Do it with care, put in extra effort, AND produce good work, and your grade will most likely be a B. Do outstanding work, going above and beyond the requirements for an assignment, show skill, creativity, and/or depth of thought, and you can receive an A. Show up every day and go through the motions, turn in work that reflects lack of care or skill, accumulate absences, or be unprepared for class, and you may earn a D or F. The grade you need for this course is irrelevant. I will do everything I can to help you earn the grade you want, but you are the one who will earn it.

### Grade breakdown:

Journals, quizzes, shorter writings	100 points
Exams	250 points
Papers and individual projects	450 points
Group presentation	100 points
Participation	100 points

### Figuring your grades:

901-1000 points	A
801-900 points	B
701-800 points	C
601-700 points	D
600 or below	F

## Attendance/Participation Policy

Participation counts for 100 points of your grade. You can't participate if you're not here. If you're absent more than a week (two classes) your grade will most likely suffer, both because you haven't participated, and because you will have less idea of what's going on and will therefore find it more difficult to keep up. I will take attendance, and construction or not, class will begin and end on time. Don't assume you have two absences and can take them as you like, then take more without consequences because you're sick. Severe illnesses and emergencies will be accommodated according to university policy, as will absence for OFFICIAL university functions such as team participation in an athletic event or band performance. Social and service organization participation is voluntary. No instructor can require you to miss class in another course as a condition of doing well in his/her class. If you have observations or other career-related obligations, you are expected to schedule them around your classes.

### Dates to Remember

Papers or projects due September 26, October 26, and November 28.  
 Exams will be October 3 in class and December 13 from 2:45-4:45 in CH337.

### **Academic Honesty**

*The English Department's statement on plagiarism is as follows: Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the assigned work and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office. I expect you to do your own work, to use only authorized help such as the writing center, conferences with me, and discussion groups in class. I expect you to use sources properly, and with appropriate imbedding into your work, use of appropriate paraphrase, summary, and quotation skills, and careful and painstaking documentation,. This applies not only to books but also to media other than print, including web and online sources.*

### **Students with Disabilities**

*If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 581-6583 (9<sup>th</sup> St. Hall).*

### **Presentations/Discussions**

*Each student will be expected to participate meaningfully in large and small group discussions and to take part in a group project. All students are expected to participate without monopolizing, and to listen with respect when another is speaking. Lively discussion flourishes in a climate of acceptance of differences in background, experience, and culture.*

*If I've left something out, or you have questions, please stop by during office hours, call and leave me a message, or e-mail me. I will usually respond by the afternoon of the next weekday.*

*English 3405 Section 002  
Reading Schedule  
Fall 2000  
(Absolutely brand new revised standard version;  
accept no substitutes!)*

*In general, readings should be completed by the first class day of the week in which they are due. There will usually be preparatory writing, discussion questions, or journal/response writing due for these as well. These will be assigned as needed in class and should be jotted down here and wherever you list your weekly assignments.*

*Week 1 August 22*

*Essentials of Children's Literature Ch. 2 (for Thurs.) Evaluation, best books*

*Week 2 August 29*

*Picture Books and Best Books discussions (please note—you are responsible for all books presented in class.)*

*Week 3 September 5*

*Essentials Ch. 3 and poem selections—Nursery rhymes from Classics and children's poetry slam*

*Week 4 September 12*

*Essentials Ch. 4 and picture book selections*

*Week 5 September 19*

*Essentials Ch. 5 and Perrault and Grimm from Classics*

*Week 6 September 26, 2000*

*Essentials Ch. 6 Fantasy Classics and picture book fantasy*

*Paper 1—annotated bibliography of picture books or research paper on illustrator due between now and October 3. Group work on selections for fantasy, select work for classic fiction. Sign up for conferences beginning next week. Discuss "Beauty and the Beast" from Classics*

*Week 7 October 3*

*Essentials Ch. 6 Fantasy: Modern and read The Devil's Arithmetic*

*Review for Mid-term exam. Come for your conference in addition to meeting class.*

*Week 8 October 10*

*Tuesday, Mid-term exam, Thursday read Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*

*Week 9 October 17*

*Read group-selected fantasy and picture book fantasies Where the Wild Things Are and Jumanji and be prepared to report on group book assignments from first week. Essentials Ch. 7 Realistic Fiction, and group selection work for realistic fiction.*

**Week 10 October 24**

**Continue Essentials Chapter 7 and group presentations on realistic novel**

**Week 11 October 31**

**Continue classic realistic fiction and read Adventures of Tom Sawyer. Tom Sawyer Dress-Up Day and Contest, Aunt Polly presiding. Paper or project 2 on a self-selected work of classic or modern fantasy due between now and Nov. 7.**

**Week 12 November 7**

**Continue realistic fiction with Secret of the Old Clock, discuss series books and sequels. Read and bring self-selected series book to class Thursday.**

**Week 13 November 14**

**Essentials Ch. 8 Historical Fiction and Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry**

**November 20-24 THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**Week 14 November 28**

**Essentials Ch. 10 Multicultural and International Literature**

**Picture books Legend of Old Befana and Arrow to the Sun and self-selected books**

**Week 15 December 5**

**Continue reading and discussion of self-selected books, tie things together, and prepare for final exam. Paper or project 3 on a self-selected work of realistic, historical, multicultural, or international fiction due Dec. 5**

**Final Examination December 13 from 2:45 to 4:45 p.m. in CH 337**